ABSTRACT

A method (20, 30, 40) for automatically self-configuring a network device (13, 17) being added to a network (8, 9) without user intervention operates by providing that the network device (13, 17) discover its network environment. The network device (13, 17) attempts to access each of those services it offers from the network (8, 9) to determine if any of these services are already being provided by the network (8, 9). Upon successfully accessing a particular service by the network device (13, 17), the network device disables the particular service within the network device (13, 17); and upon unsuccessfully accessing the particular service by the network device (13, 17), the network device (13, 17) activates the predetermined service within the network device (13, 17). Another technique for self-configuring the network device (13, 17) provides that the network device (13, 17) examine the IP address (or class of addresses) the network device (13, 17) acquires from the network (8, 9). Upon determining that the acquired Internet Protocol address is a private Internet Protocol address, the network device (17) configures itself to use a local area network port (5) to access the Internet (11) and the network (9) without user intervention. Alternatively, upon determining that the assigned Internet Protocol address is not a private Internet Protocol address, the network device (13) configures itself to use another port (6) (*e.g.*, a WAN port) to access the Internet (11) and a LAN port (5) to access the network (9). Both of these configuration methods are performed entirely without user intervention to reduce the amount of setup required by a user.